

# SIKHISM AND COW PROTECTION

In this article we will find out whether the Sikh Gurus considered Cow as a holy animal or not, we will also find out how the Gurus advocated the Sikhs to protect Cow and not consume beef. First let's find out what Sikh sources say about this topic.

- The Khaamadhenu, the cow of miraculous powers, is the singing of the Glory of the Lord's Name, Har, Har! (265-5)
- Without milk, a cow serves no purpose. Without water, the crop withers, and it will not bring a good price. Similarly, If we do not meet the Lord, our Friend, how can we find our place of rest? (133-7 and 8)

**Here, it is said that a cow without milk has no purpose, which means that the cow only serves one purpose, which is milk, not any other purpose like meat. Here attention should be paid because meat is considered to be one of the main purposes of animals, but from the above lines we can interpret that a cow has only one purpose, which is Milk.**

- Says Ravi Daas, Your slave, O Lord, I am disillusioned and detached; please, spare me your anger, and have mercy on my soul. He is the ocean of peace; the miraculous tree of life, the wish-fulfilling jewel,

and the Kaamadhenu, the cow which fulfills all desires, all are in his power. (658–12)

- The four great blessings, the eight supernatural spiritual powers of the Siddhas, the wish-fulfilling Elysian cow, and the wish-fulfilling tree of life - all these come from the Lord, Har, Har! O Nanak, holding tight to the Sanctuary of the Lord, the ocean of peace, you shall not suffer the pains of birth and death, or fall into the womb of reincarnation again. (717-18,19)

- May I eliminate the great sin of cow butchering in this world.  
Uggardanti, Dasam Granth

ਗੁਰੂ ਘਾਤ ਕਾ ਦੋਖ ਜਗ ਸਿਉਂ ਮਿਟਾਉਂ ॥

guoo ghaat kaa dhokh jag siau(n) miTaauoo(n) ||

Eliminate the killing of the cow from the entire universe.

ਛੱਤ੍ਰ ਤਖਤ ਮੁਗਲਨ ਕਰਹੂੰ ਮਾਰ ਦੂਰੇ ॥

chha'tr takhat mugalan karahoo(n) maar dhoore ||

I shall kill the Mughals and end their rule.

From here, we can interpret that the Gurus connected the cow mostly with the Lord as a wish-fulfilling being, and Guru Gobind Singh Ji even said that cow butchering is a grave sin.

The line of Guru Gobind Singh Ji should have closed the topic, but I'll provide you with more real-life incidents that will prove that beef eating is a sin in Sikhism.

# SOME REAL LIFE INCIDENTS

❖ When Guru Arjan Dev was tortured by Jahangir by making him sit on a hot pan, and hot sand was poured over him, Guru ji had not flinched an iota and continued to face the torture in silence and peaceful composure. But when Jahangir decided to take the torture to another level and ordered that Guru Arjan Dev ji be wrapped by a freshly slaughtered cowhide, Guruji requested Jahangir to allow him a bath first. Jahangir relented to the request. Guruji entered the river Ravi, and never came out of it by merging with the Almighty. It was obvious that Guruji preferred to merge with the Almighty rather than face the humiliation of being wrapped with a slaughtered cowhide, and this incident depicts how a cow was held in great sanctity by Guruji during his times.

The death of Guru Arjan is a great turning point in the history of the Sikh nation, for it inflamed the religious passion of the Sikhs, and it was at this time that those seeds of hatred of the Musalman power were sown which took such deep root in the minds of all the faithful followers of Nának.

## 6.—GURU HAR GOVIND.

Arjan died leaving a minor son and heir, Har Govind, a boy eleven years of age. Taking advantage of his minority, his uncle, Pirthi Mal, urged

\* The tradition goes that Chándu Shah had suggested to the emperor that the Guru should be sewed in the hide of a cow.

When the hide was brought before him, the Guru asked permission to bathe in the Rávi. He was sent thither with a strong escort, but, having once plunged into the running water, never appeared again.

- ❖ Guru Amar Das condemned atrocities against Brahmins and cattle.

According to W. Owen Cole and P. S. Sambhi, an aggregate of evidence tentatively suggests that the Guru refrained from censuring Hindu traditions one of which was cow slaughtering. Under Sikh rule, cow slaughter was punishable by death, an injunction adhered to by even the British after the annexation of Punjab. Sikhs and Hindu traditionally held the cow as sacred due to their role in providing sustenance and haulage.

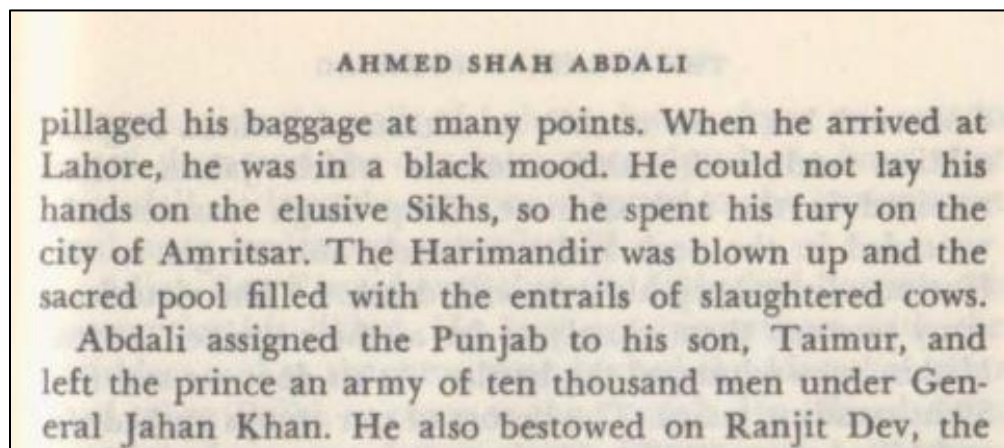
- ❖ During a hunting expedition outside of the village of Ramdas, Guru Hargobind Sahib was approached by a local Hindu who was requesting help to stop a group of Muslims butchering cows. After [saluting Guru Hargobind] he clasped his hands and began to say, "There are vile people close to here butchering cows and they are trying to get hold of more cows with great effort. Listening to this Satiguru Hargobind mounted his horse and proceeded ahead with great anger, seeing where they were they closed the distance, taking out his sword he quickly slaughtered them. Some of them ran away, but they were flanked,

surrounded and attacked, they were chopped down and then into pieces. [ ]

Gurpratap Suraj Prakash Granth (1843), Raas 6, Chapter 55

Author: the Great Poet [Mahakavi] Santokh Singh [ ]

- ❖ In the subsequent years following the assassination of Banda Singh Bahadur, when Abdali was angered at the massacre of his troops by Sikhs, in retribution he attacked Sri Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar and blew it with gunpowder. And he desecrated the holy Sarovar with slaughtered cow carcasses. Later, Massa Rangar committed a similar sacrilege, and apart from the desecration of the holy Sarovar with slaughtered cows, he also made sex workers dance and sing in the premises of Sri Harmandir Sahib. However, this time, he was duly punished by Mahtab Singh and Sukha Singh, who swiftly beheaded Massa Rangar in Sri Harmandir Sahib.

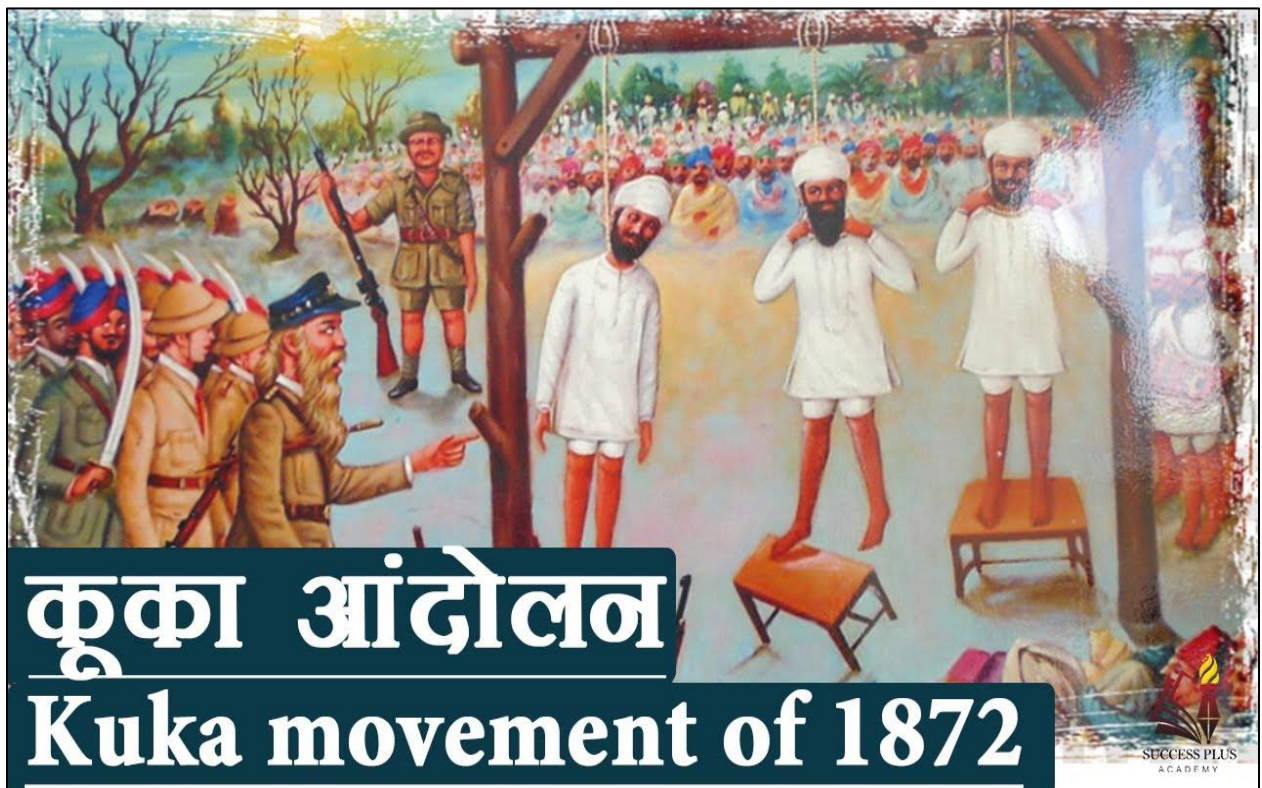


Therefore, it was at least obvious to the Mughals of those times that the massacre of cows would seriously hurt the sentiments of Sikhs

- ❖ Maharaja Ranjit Singh has been an example of the zenith of the Sikh empire that broke off the shackles of slavery of North Indian Hindu-Sikhs from the Afghans and Mughals, who were bent on establishing Islam in India to replace Hinduism. And during the rule of the Maharaja, beef eating and cow slaughter were prohibited. This was although the population of the areas ruled by the Maharaja included a Muslim population over 55%. And this was because even though Sikhism had adopted a distinct identity as a nascent religion, it had not severed its roots and connections with Hinduism from whom its cultural and religious values were resourced, including the newly baptized Sikhs who were drawn exclusively from Hindu families, especially when they raised their eldest son as a Sikh.

As they advanced across India, the British ran into Ranjit Singh's powerful Sikh empire. On the frontier of Punjab, they paused and decided to leave it and Kashmir's principalities to the Sikhs. The Sikhs were redoubtable warriors. And, having becoming more militant, the Sikhs attacked their own Muslims and the Kashmiri moderates. Among other measures, they laid ruinous taxes on them, causing a famine in 1832; they banned the distinctive Muslim call to prayer and closed down the major mosques; and they again promoted veneration of the totem animal of the Hindus, the cow, making the slaughter of cattle a capital crime.

❖ According to Mark Doyle, the first cow protection societies on the Indian subcontinent were started by Kukas of Sikhism, a reformist group seeking to purify Sikhism. The Sikh Kukas or Namdharis were agitating for cow protection after the British annexed Punjab. In 1871, states Peter van der Veer, Sikhs killed Muslim butchers of cows in Amritsar and Ludhiana, and viewed cow protection as a "sign of the moral quality of the state". According to Barbara Metcalf and Thomas Metcalf, Sikhs were agitating for the well-being of cows in the 1860s, and their ideas spread to Hindu reform movements.



For detailing - <https://trunicle.com/kuka-movement-the-story-of-gaurakshak-namdhari-sikhs/>

Keeping aside the topic of whether the cow is considered holy or not in Sikhism, we can conclude that there is a clear prohibition on eating beef. At the same time, I challenge anyone to bring up any instance where the Gurus have consumed cow meat.

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